

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 068315

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MASS, NO

SUBJECT: F-16 PROGRAM

REFERENCE: OSLO 480

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS HAS ASKED THAT WE FORWARD THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO YOU: QUOTE I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR 28 JAN 78 MESSAGE WHICH EMPHASIZES THE NEED FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN YOUR EMBASSY AND DOD ON F-16 MATTERS. DOD IS KEENLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF THE F-16 PROGRAM IN NORWAY AND WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH STATE TO ENSURE THAT ALL MAJOR ISSUES ARE QUICKLY BROUGHT
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TO YOUR ATTENTION.

QUOTE THE DISCONNECT IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN STATE, DEFENSE, AND THE US EMBASSY OSLO RELATIVE TO THE NORWEGIAN POSITION ON THIRD COUNTRY SALES WAS UNFORTUNATE, BUT MOST ASSUREDLY, NOT INTENTIONAL. IT WAS THE RESULT OF THE SPECIFIC OCCASION OF THE STOLTENBERG VISIT. THE POSITION

TAKEN BY STOLTENBERG IN HIS 14 DEC 77 CALL AT DEFENSE WAS MUCH MORE CONCILIATORY THAN EXPECTED, AND IT WAS ACCORDINGLY DETERMINED TO WORK QUICKLY TO DEVISE A COOPERATIVE APPROACH LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. THE ISSUE

THEN REQUIRED EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO ENSURE THAT THE SOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE GON WAS PRACTICAL AND THAT IT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED AT NO COST TO THE USG.

QUOTE IT WAS OUR INTENTION TO KEEP YOU FULLY INFORMED CONCERNING COMMUNICATIONS PASSED BY DEFENSE WITH RESPECT TO THE RESPONSE TO STOLTENBERG, BUT REGRETTABLY, THE FAST-MOVING EVENTS CAUSED SOME OVERSIGHTS. GENERAL FISH ARRIVED IN NORWAY ON 19 JAN 78 AS PLANNED (OUR MESSAGE DTG 292238Z DEC 77). HE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH YOUR DCM, MR. BREMER, AND PROVIDED HIM AND MR. STOLTENBERG COPIES OF THE LETTER WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN CLEARED WITH STATE. IT WAS GENERAL FISH'S UNDERSTANDING THAT STATE HAD FURNISHED YOU THE TEXT OF THE LETTER BY MESSAGE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE STATE MESSAGE WAS DELAYED AND REACHED YOU THE NEXT DAY. STOLTENBERG'S 24 HOUR DELAY IN HIS PLANNED ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT LED TO THE EARLY RELEASE OF THIS INFORMATION IN THE MESSAGE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE WHO, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE F-16 STEERING COMMITTEE, WAS SEEKING IN GOOD FAITH TO PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MEMBERS OF HIS COMMITTEE WITH CONCURRENT NOTIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT. HIS PREVIOUS 12 JAN 78 LETTER TO MR. OMRONG WAS INTENDED TO ALERT THE NORWEGIANS TO CERTAIN PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES THAT COULD ARISE IN IMPLEMENTING THE UNDERTAKING AND SHOULD NOT BE READ AS CASTING DOUBT ON OUR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT OUR OBLIGATION.

QUOTE I REGRET ANY PERTURBATION THIS AFFAIR MAY HAVE CAUSED, AND WILL PERSONALLY ENSURE THAT ADDED EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH YOUR EMBASSY IN THE FUTURE. TO THIS END, I WILL CONTINUE TO BE YOUR OFFICIAL POINT OF CONTACT WITHIN THE DOD. SINCERELY, DAVID E. MCGIFFERT END QUOTE. VANCE

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